

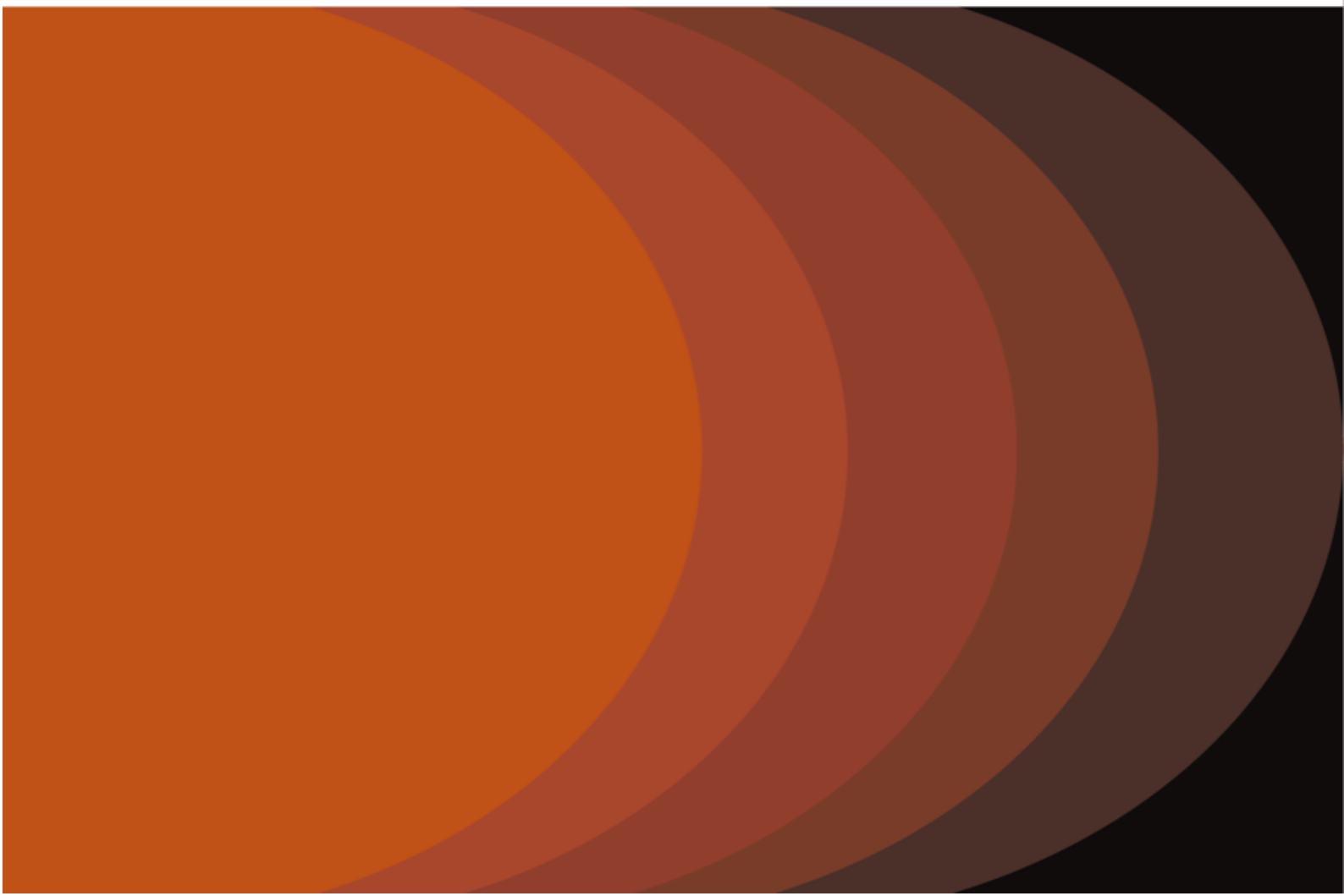


Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in

Bury and Rochdale

HM Inspectorate of Probation, June 2020



Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Mike Ryan, supported by a team of inspectors and colleagues from across the Inspectorate. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

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Please note that, throughout the report, the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

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Foreword

This inspection is part of our four-year programme of youth offending service (YOS) inspections. We have inspected and rated Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service (YJS) across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work. Overall, Bury and Rochdale YJS was rated as 'Good'.

This is a combined YJS, working across two local authorities. The single Board, with shared chairing between the two authorities, works well and is impressively led. The Board is supported by an equally impressive management team. This is an outward-looking group of leaders and managers, keen to learn from the experience of colleagues across the children's services and youth justice sectors. There is a very strong sense of working in partnership towards shared goals in youth justice. This sense translates into effective partnership working in the work done with children. We found a stable, skilled and committed group of staff delivering the service.

It is pleasing that the YJS has developed a 'best practice' approach to out-of-court disposal work, in part based on our joint thematic inspection of 2018.¹ The consistently good quality of assessment work we found here meant that the disposals were well delivered in most cases.

The YJS shows considerable strength in supporting children and attending to their safety and wellbeing. The overall quality of the service could be improved with more careful attention to work concerning the risk of harm to members of the public that some children present. This is a difficult balance to strike, in the context of putting the child's safety and wellbeing first, but that is a challenge which must be met.

We found good leadership in the YJS. This, coupled with the commitment to improve the services delivered, means that we have confidence that, if the recommendations provided are successfully implemented, this team can achieve and maintain the delivery of the highest possible quality of services to children in Bury and Rochdale.



Justin Russell

Chief Inspector of Probation

¹ HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service. (2018). *Out-of-court disposal work in youth offending teams*.

Ratings

Bury and Rochdale Youth Offending Service		Score	23/36
Overall rating		Good	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Good	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Good	
1.4	Information and facilities	Good	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Requires improvement	
2.2	Planning	Good	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
2.4	Reviewing	Requires improvement	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Outstanding	
3.2	Planning	Good	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
3.4	Joint working	Good	

Executive summary

Overall, Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service (YJS) is rated as: 'Good'. This rating has been determined by inspecting the YJS in three areas of their work, referred to as 'domains'. We inspect against 12 'standards', shared between the domains. The standards are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. They are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.² Published scoring rules generate the overall youth offending service rating.³ The findings and subsequent ratings in those domains are described below.

1. Organisational delivery



Bury and Rochdale YJS has the benefit of a committed and experienced Board, ably supported by a skilled management team. It is well attended and has a good command of the issues concerning the children in the area. There is strong and purposeful governance and management.

Services are delivered by a stable, experienced staff group, working in a partnership providing a good range of supportive interventions.

We interviewed the YJS manager and the Chair of the Management Board. We held meetings with other members of the Board and key stakeholders. Key findings about organisation delivery were as follows:

- There is a clear 'Child First' vision guiding the work of the YJS, established and promoted by the Board and management, and providing staff and partners with a clear purpose.
- There are very strong partnership arrangements to support the work of the service, linking children to resources to address educational, substance misuse and mental wellbeing concerns.
- Staff are well trained and there is good access to career development opportunities.
- Staff are very positive about their experience of working in the Bury and Rochdale YJS.

But:

- Staff members' contribution to the development of policy and strategy could be improved.
- Arrangements to hear the voice of children and their parents or carers are under-developed.
- Management information needs to improve.

² HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards can be found here:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

³ Each of the 12 standards is scored on a 0–3 scale in which 'Inadequate' = 0; 'Requires improvement' = 1; 'Good' = 2; 'Outstanding' = 3. Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0 to 36, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows: 0–6 = 'Inadequate', 7–18 = 'Requires improvement', 19–30 = 'Good', 31–36 = 'Outstanding'.

2. Court disposals



We took a detailed look at 18 community sentences and seven custodial sentences managed by the YJS. We also conducted 24 interviews with the relevant case managers. We examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery; and reviewing. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance, and the safety and wellbeing of the child. For the 20 cases where there were factors related to harm,⁴ we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the 20 cases where there were factors related to safety and wellbeing, we looked at work done to keep the child safe. The quality of the work undertaken needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

In Bury and Rochdale YJS, our rating of 'Requires improvement' for the quality of assessment is based on the fact that less than two-thirds of the cases we inspected met our requirements with regard to keeping other people safe. For planning and implementation, and delivery of the sentence, over 65 per cent of the cases met all our standards, so we judged the work to be 'Good'. Too few case reviews maintained an appropriate focus on keeping other people safe, leading to a judgement of 'Requires improvement'.

Our key findings about court disposals are as follows:

- There is impressive engagement with children, and their parents/carers.
- The YJS is well served with partnership arrangements to support children. Partners share the sense of mission and 'Child First' vision.
- There is a strong commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children, and this was clear in the high-quality work throughout the management of cases.
- The process of transition to adult services is well managed and well resourced.

But:

- Case managers did not always maintain a sufficient focus on risk of harm issues in the assessments and case reviews we inspected.
- Case managers did not always consider the impact of offending on known or potential future victims.

3. Out-of-court disposals



We inspected 17 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of three youth conditional cautions, four youth cautions and nine community resolutions; one further case had been worked with on a prevention basis. We interviewed the case managers in 17 cases.

We examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to

⁴ The number of cases quoted here that relate to harm, or safety and wellbeing, is based on the inspectors' rather than the YJS's, judgement.

address desistance. For the 10 cases where there were factors related to harm,⁵ we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the 13 cases where there were relevant factors, we looked at work done to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. We also looked at the quality of joint working with local police. The quality of the work undertaken needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

In the Bury and Rochdale YJS, over 80 per cent of the cases met our requirements for quality of assessment, leading to a rating of 'Outstanding' for this standard. As a result of the relatively small sample size, and taking into account other evidence on quality, the ratings panel agreed to exercise professional discretion to establish a rating of 'Good' for the quality of planning standard. Over 65 per cent of the out-of-court disposals cases we inspected met our requirements for implementation and joint working, leading to a rating of 'Good' for each of these standards.

Our key findings about out-of-court disposals are as follows:

- The YJS had reviewed and revised out-of-court disposal work, in line with identified 'best practice'.
- Assessment work was of high quality in almost all cases.
- Work undertaken was based on good levels of engagement with children and their parents/carers.
- The work of the case manager was supported by very strong partnerships, particularly with police colleagues.

But:

- The focus on risk of harm concerns was not always maintained throughout the work with the child.

⁵ Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0 to 36, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows: 0–6 = 'Inadequate', 7–18 = 'Requires improvement', 19–30 = 'Good', 31–36 = 'Outstanding'.

Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings, we have made six recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of the YJS in Bury and Rochdale. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth offending services, and better protect the public.

The Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service should:

1. provide refresher training to all staff in the assessment and management of risk of harm
2. review all cases where risk of harm to the public is identified, using the increased capacity for direct line management, and adopt a clear approach to the management of those risks
3. develop an approach whereby children and their parents/carers have a clear means of expressing their interests within the governance arrangements of the service
4. involve staff members more in the development of policy and strategy
5. improve access to police information, for the purposes of risk management
6. improve interrogation of the Integrated Youth Support Services case management system, to understand better the needs of children so that interventions are targeted more effectively.

Background

Youth offending teams (YOTs) supervise 10–18 year-olds who have been sentenced by a court, or who have come to the attention of the police because of their offending behaviour but have not been charged – instead, they were dealt with out of court. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of (HMI) Probation inspects both these aspects of youth offending services.

YOTs are statutory partnerships, and they are multidisciplinary, to deal with the needs of the whole child. They are required to have staff from local authority social care and education services, the police, the National Probation Service and local health services.⁶ Most YOTs are based within local authorities but this can vary.

YOT work is governed and shaped by a range of legislation and guidance specific to the youth justice sector (such as the National Standards for Youth Justice) or else applicable across the criminal justice sector (for example, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements guidance). The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) provides some funding to YOTs. It also monitors their performance and issues guidance to them about how things are to be done.

Bury and Rochdale formed as a fully integrated shared youth offending service (YOS) in July 2015. In 2019, the Partnership Board agreed to rename the service 'Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Service' (YJS). Prior to July 2015, some youth justice services between Bury and Rochdale were co-located and shared but both services were governed independently. Bury and Rochdale are small Greater Manchester authorities, and it was assessed that there were clear economies of scale alongside opportunities for improved services to children through shared arrangements. The YJS has a stable workforce, and there has been an increase in expenditure over the last two years owing to investment in violence reduction among children.

At the date of the inspection announcement, 83 per cent of Bury and Rochdale's current youth justice cohort were male (106 male, 21 female). The majority were aged 16 and over (77 children; 60.4 per cent) and just 11 (8.7 per cent) were aged 13 or under. Thirty children (23.4 per cent) were from black or minority ethnic backgrounds. Although white children appear under-represented in the cohort, there was an over-representation of white males from the areas of highest deprivation across Bury and Rochdale.

Within the caseload, at the time of the inspection announcement, 6.5 per cent were Looked After Children resident in the area and 9.1 per cent placed outside the area. For a small number of cases (3.9 per cent), there was a child protection plan and for almost a quarter of cases (22.1 per cent), there was a child in need plan. All the children aged 10 to 16 were in some form of formal education, with over half (56.8 per cent) in pupil referral units. Over half (52.5 per cent) of the children aged 17 and over were not in education, training or employment.⁷

⁶ The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 set out the arrangements for local YOTs and partnership working.

⁷ Data supplied by Bury and Rochdale YJS.

Contextual facts

234	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in Bury and Rochdale ⁸
241	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in the North West ⁸
222	First-time entrant rate per 100,000 in England and Wales ⁸
39.3%	Reoffending rate in Bury and Rochdale ⁹
38.4%	Reoffending rate in England and Wales ⁹

Population information¹⁰

410,109	Total population of Bury and Rochdale
40,629	Total youth population (10–17 years) of Bury and Rochdale
8,982	Total black and minority ethnic youth population of Bury and Rochdale ¹¹

Caseload information¹²

Age (years)	10–14	15–17
Bury and Rochdale YJS	25%	75%
National average	23%	77%

Race/ethnicity	White	Black and minority ethnic	Not known
Bury and Rochdale youth population	78%	22%	0%
Bury and Rochdale YOT	67%	18%	15%
National average	70%	26%	4%

Gender	Male	Female
Bury and Rochdale YOT	83%	16%
National average	85%	15%

⁸ Youth Justice Board. (2020). First-time entrants, April 2018 to March 2019.

⁹ Ministry of Justice. (2020). Proven reoffending statistics, April 2017 to March 2018.

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics. (2019). UK population estimates, mid-2018.

¹¹ Office for National Statistics. (2012). Census 2011.

¹² Youth Justice Board. (2019). Youth justice annual statistics: 2017 to 2018.

Additional caseload data¹³ All supplied by YOT as standard data.

83	Total caseload
55	Total current caseload on community sentences
5	Total current caseload in custody
4	Total current caseload on licence
4	Total current caseload with youth caution
3	Total current caseload with youth conditional caution
12	Total current caseload with community resolution or other out-of-court disposal
72%	Current caseload subject to court disposal
28%	Current caseload subject to out-of-court disposal

Education and child protection status of caseload

6.5%	Current caseload 'Looked After Children' resident in the YOT area
9.1%	Current caseload 'Looked After Children' placed outside the YOT area
3.9%	Current caseload with child protection plan
22.1%	Current caseload with child in need plan
0%	Current caseload aged 16 and under not in school/pupil referral unit/alternative education
56.8%	Current caseload aged 16 and under in a pupil referral unit or alternative education
52.5%	Current caseload aged 17+ not in education, training or employment

For children subject to court disposals:

Offence types ¹⁴	%
Violence against the person	44
Sexual offence (contact)	4
Burglary	4
Robbery	16
Theft and handling stolen goods	4
Summary motoring offences	4
Indictable motoring offences	20
Other summary offences	4

¹³ Data supplied by the YOS, reflecting the caseload at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹⁴ Data from the cases assessed during this inspection.

1. Organisational delivery



The Bury and Rochdale YJS is well governed and well managed. The Board is sighted on performance measures that inform, promote and facilitate the work being delivered. The management team is experienced, skilled and knowledgeable. There is an able, experienced and committed group of staff. This applies both to case managers and to staff seconded to work in the YJS.

Strengths:

- Managers communicate well with their staff.
- Oversight of cases is systematic and appreciated by staff.
- Staff are well trained and there is a good level of engagement with the management and governance of the service.
- There are strong partnership arrangements, successfully addressing the needs of most children who are supervised by the YJS.
- Bury and Rochdale YJS provides a good working environment, viewed by members of staff as 'a great place to work'.

Areas for improvement:

- There is no evidence of staff being directly involved in the development of policy and strategy.
- There are some shortfalls in the availability and analysis of data concerning individual children who present a risk of causing serious harm.
- There are some information and communications technology issues affecting the capacity of the service to manage and analyse data.
- There is no direct inclusion of children or their parents/carers in the development and running of the service.
- Not all staff receive an annual appraisal.

Organisations that are well led and well managed are more likely to achieve their aims. We inspect against four standards.

1.1. Governance and leadership



The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Good

Key data¹⁵

Total spend in previous financial year (2018/19)	£1,578,894 (includes £577,650 YJB grant)
Total projected budget current for financial year (2019/20)	£1,858,673 (includes £614,707 YJB grant)

In making a judgement about governance and leadership, we take into account the answers to the following three questions:

Is there a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?

There is a well-attended and well-chaired YJS Management Board, with the position of Chair shared by senior leaders from Bury and Rochdale local authorities.

The Board members said:

“All models start with the child in the middle. Strengths-based, relational and trauma-based approaches are all slightly different but all start with building resilience. At its heart it is about forming a relationship as a bridge to change, and if you can’t form a relationship, it’s about finding the person who can. It is also about building safer communities. It’s about what we do, not about what I do”.

There is a clearly articulated ‘Child First’ vision, and this is recognised by staff and partners, particularly through the rebranding of the service into a ‘youth justice service’. Almost all staff (94 per cent) think that they are sufficiently updated on strategic issues.

New Board members said that they had a careful induction into the work of the YJS, including time spent with the operational team.

There is good evidence of identification, and management, of risks to the operation of the service.

Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?

Board members are well sighted on issues concerning the work of the YJS and, through their own roles, are strong advocates for the service. There is good evidence that Board members facilitate access to services which enhance the capacity of the YJS.

¹⁵ Data supplied by Bury and Rochdale YJS.

Oversight of the head of service, whose role includes responsibility for Looked After Children and the emergency duty team, is provided by an assistant director of children’s services.

We found a commitment to partnership working translated into a strong partnership delivery team. Where deficits had been identified – for example, the need for an in-house health worker in Rochdale – solutions were found. In the core areas of transition to adult probation supervision, health, child protection, mental health, substance misuse, and employment and education, there were sufficient resources within the YJS.

The Board is well briefed on the essential characteristics of the caseload of the YJS.

Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?

There is a knowledgeable, skilled and experienced management team. This team has increased, in the last three months, through the appointment of two advanced practitioners to undertake line management work. Alongside these duties, they will be holding the cases of children who present the highest risks of safety and wellbeing, or harm to the public. This will allow the management team to operate at a 7:1 case manager to supervisor ratio.

YJS managers are closely involved in the development of Board strategies and plans; there is a keen sense of working in concert with the Board.

Board members were pleased to report an increase in ‘grip’ of the issues about the performance of the YJS team since the appointment of the YJS head of service last year.

The management group is outward looking and participates actively in the forum for Greater Manchester youth justice managers. Board members also provide an outward-looking approach.

1.2. Staff



Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Good

Key staffing data¹⁶

Total staff headcount (full-time equivalent (FTE))	26.7, of which 14 were case managers
Vacancy rate (total unfilled posts as a percentage of total staff headcount)	0%
Vacancy rate case managers only (total unfilled case manager posts as a percentage of total case manager headcount)	0%
Average caseload of case managers (FTE)	8.3 ¹⁷
Average annual working days lost through sickness (all staff)	5.2
Staff attrition (percentage of all staff leaving in a 12-month period)	0%

¹⁶ Data supplied by YOS and reflecting staffing at the time of the inspection announcement.

¹⁷ Data supplied by YOS, based on staffing and workload at the time of the inspection announcement.

In making a judgement about staffing, we take into account the answers to the following four questions:

Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?

Our HM Inspectorate of Probation staff survey tells us that the large majority of staff (84 per cent) have a workload with which they are comfortable. The average caseload for a case manager is eight, which is a reasonable indication of a well-resourced team. This is a resilient workforce, with low levels of sickness absence being reported (5.2 days per annum).

There are no reported staff vacancies. Additional recruitment over the past year has been paid for by internal savings and external funding streams.

Do the skills of YOT staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?

Bury and Rochdale YJS has a stable and experienced workforce, who demonstrate passion for the work they do. They believe in the vision of the organisation and are, in the main, a highly motivated group of staff showing great commitment to the children with whom they work. We found some excellent practice in the inspection sample, although this was not always the case.

The strategy and intent of the Board are communicated to staff but we saw no evidence of staff contributing to the development of the strategy.

The performance management system, including annual appraisal, is not being systematically applied and, therefore, we are concerned that the YJS may not be addressing all performance issues which may arise.

Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?

All practitioners rated the quality of supervision provided by their manager to be either very good or quite good, and case managers reported meetings with their line manager taking place monthly, with all cases being reviewed.

Our survey indicates that 94 per cent of the staff group understands the current YJS vision, challenges and development plan either very well or quite well.

Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?

Rochdale and Bury Council has introduced relational training (based on change in individuals being linked to individual relationships), which underpins their delivery of services. Staff had all received Asset Plus training, and new staff had this as part of their induction; however, staff reported that they had not had specific risk of harm training for some time.

The arrangements for Bury and Rochdale are the same as those for all of the Greater Manchester YOTs and involve centrally commissioned training based on all of their identified needs.

Staff reported a good mix of training opportunities, including the 'Me learning' site, which can be logged into at any time. Alongside mandatory safeguarding training, most have just done restorative justice training, and some have done 'Break for Change' group work training. A few staff have been able to secure substantial career-enhancing professional training.

Induction for new staff is delivered comprehensively to a detailed schedule – no one is thrown in at the deep end.

1.3 Partnerships and services



A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.	Good
Percentage of current caseload with mental health issues ¹⁸	35.1%
Percentage of current caseload with substance misuse issues	62.3%
Percentage of current caseload with an education, health and care plan	14.3%

In making a judgement about partnerships and services, we take into account the answers to the following three questions:

Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children, to ensure that the YOT can deliver well-targeted services?

Where data is available, there is up-to-date analysis of the needs of the children supervised by the YJS. There is a clear understanding of their needs, particularly in relation to the identification of appropriate services to support desistance.

There is sufficient understanding of the demographic make-up of the caseload to allow the YJS Board to be assured that issues of diversity and disproportionality are understood, and working arrangements adjusted accordingly.

Does the YOT partnership have access to the volume, range and quality of services and interventions to meet the needs of all children?

The YJS identified concerns about education services in Bury and health provision in Rochdale. These issues have been addressed and appropriate resource has been deployed to work in the partnership team. There is insufficient access to speech and language therapy, given the high incidence of communication difficulties experienced by the YJS's caseload.

We found strong service provision in relation to health, substance misuse, transition to adult services, education and employment, mental health and access to mentoring support.

Are arrangements with statutory partners, providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services?

There was sufficient access to almost all specialist and mainstream services, either in an in-house mode, in the case of education and physical health, or through close links with local agencies dealing with substance misuse or mental health/emotional wellbeing issues.

¹⁸ Data supplied by Bury and Rochdale YJS.

There are robust arrangements, through working with complex safeguarding teams, to screen all YJS cases in relation to child criminal and sexual exploitation in a monthly review meeting.

Seconded police staff form an essential element of the partnership approach, supporting the delivery of work with those who present a high risk of causing serious harm and leading the out-of-court disposal process.

As well as a wider contribution to the YJS, seconded probation staff provide support in managing transition cases into adult services. Where the child is then supervised by the National Probation Service, these staff members retain the management of the case.

The response to our court survey was wholly positive, reflecting the good partnership working between Greater Manchester YOTs in providing services to a rationalised set of courts in the area. The Bury and Rochdale Youth Justice Team is viewed as excellent in providing advice and support to courts.

Involvement of children and their parents/carers

There are many mechanisms for eliciting the perspectives of children and their parents/carers, but there is no evidence that these views then have a direct impact on the development and running of the service.

Our survey of children supervised by the Bury and Rochdale YJS yielded mainly positive results, with six out of nine respondents rating the YJS as 'fantastic'.

1.4. Information and facilities



Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children.

Good

In making a judgement about staffing, we take into account the answers to the following four questions:

Are the necessary policies and guidance in place to enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all children?

There is a range of processes to cascade policy and guidance, including email, team meetings, team development days and individual supervision.

There is an appropriate range of policies to support the delivery of a high-quality service, and there is a timetable to review all policies.

Does the YOT's delivery environment(s) meet the needs of all children, and enable staff to deliver a high-quality service?

Office space is suitable and the children helped to design the meeting rooms where they undertake youth justice team activities.

Staff have their own working space in an open-plan office, and they appreciate this. Staff safety is attended to by a lone working policy, which works effectively.

Do the information and communications technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a high-quality service, meeting the needs of all children?

All staff have laptop computers and smartphones, and are therefore able to work as flexibly as necessary.

There were no reported difficulties with the Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) case management system, in terms of operations, and case managers can access local child services information systems to support their work.

Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

Through active membership of the Greater Manchester Youth Justice Forum, access to YJB support and scrutiny of HM Inspectorate of Probation reports, there is good awareness of developments in the national youth justice sector. A clear example of this is a redesigned out-of-court disposal process, in line with best practice identified by HM Inspectorate of Probation.

There are some problems associated with accessing live police intelligence, due to technical issues with the new Greater Manchester Police ICT system. This has had an impact on formal case planning and review, and an adverse effect on performance data, such as first-time entrant measures.

The IYSS ICT system used by the YJS does not have good, accessible report-generating functions. This limits the extent of analysis – for example, of desistance factors – which would support strategic planning.

2. Court disposals



We took a detailed look at 18 community sentences and 7 custodial sentences managed by the YOT. We also conducted 24 interviews with the relevant case managers. We examined the quality of assessment; planning; implementation and delivery; and reviewing. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance, and the safety and wellbeing of the child. For the 20 cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the 20 cases where there were relevant factors, we looked at work done to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. The quality of the work undertaken needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

Our rating of 'Requires improvement' for the quality of assessment is based on the fact that less than two-thirds of the cases we inspected met our requirements for keeping other people safe. For planning and implementation, and delivery of the sentence, over 65 per cent of the cases met all our standards, so we judged the quality of work to be 'Good'. Too few case reviews maintained an appropriate focus on keeping other people safe, leading to a judgement of 'Requires improvement' for this standard.

This was a mixed set of results. We found strengths in the service's work on desistance and the focus on safety and wellbeing. We were concerned that case managers showed a tendency sometimes to overlook, underestimate or misunderstand the level and nature of risk of harm to others.

Strengths:

- Assessment, planning and implementation to promote desistance, and safety and wellbeing are sufficient in the majority of cases.
- There is evidence of very good partnership working in many cases.
- Work on the safety and wellbeing of children is consistently of high quality.
- There is a high level of involvement of children and their parents/carers in the delivery of casework.
- There is a clear and well-used approach to the management of transition to adult services.

Areas for improvement:

- There is not always consistent assessment and classification of harmful behaviour.
- The YJS needs to consider how contingency arrangements are articulated in plans when risk of harm has been identified.
- Not all cases demonstrate a sensitivity to issues concerning known or potential future victims.
- Not all cases are systematically and comprehensively reviewed, particularly taking into account changes in the lives of the children.

Work with children sentenced by the courts will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections, we look at a sample of cases. In each of those cases we inspect against four standards.

2.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.

Requires improvement

Our rating¹⁹ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	88%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	88%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	60%

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?

The focus on children's desistance from offending was of a good standard in almost all the cases inspected. Assessments were consistently well done, regarding the analysis of offending behaviour (23 out of 25), and there was an appropriate level of understanding of individual needs and issues (23 out of 25). In almost all cases, there was a good understanding of the maturity of children, and how that affected their engagement in the court disposal.

Importantly, we found that children and their parents/carers were meaningfully involved in their assessment in the large majority of cases (23 out of 25). In one case, the inspector noted:

"Factors linked to offending and desistance were detailed within the initial pre-sentence report Asset Plus. This assessment was completed after a number of meetings with the child and their parents, with each of them being read the final report which was going to be presented at court. Reading the information, as well as the content of the appointments, provides good evidence that the problems facing the child were understood and relevant issues discussed".

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

The children that the YJS works with often have complex and troubled backgrounds. It is encouraging that most (22 out of 25) of the assessments of cases inspected were of sufficient quality, in terms of keeping children safe. We found the classification of safety and wellbeing to be accurate in 23 of the 25 cases inspected, and this was based on good use of all available sources of information.

A typical finding in the inspection is shown in the following case, where the inspector noted:

¹⁹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

“It is evident from the initial assessment that there are considerable concerns in relation to safety and wellbeing, in terms of child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, self-harm, substance misuse and vulnerability to negative peer influences. In response to these concerns, the assessment indicates that child protection management meetings and liaison between agencies will be needed”.


Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

We expect assessment work to provide an analysis of how other people will be kept safe when there are signs that the child could present a risk of harm to other people. In too many of the cases inspected (40 per cent), we judged the risk of harm classification to be inaccurate, most frequently assessing the child as presenting a low risk when, in the inspector’s view, there was evidence of at least a medium risk. This means that we considered that the child had demonstrated behaviour which was of concern, even if the current circumstances meant that the behaviour was unlikely to be imminently repeated. In one case, the inspector made the following observation:

“The child has been convicted of two common assault offences against the same victim, consisting of punches to the face. One assault was repeated two days after the first one. I therefore feel that the potential for serious harm was medium at the outset, rather than low”.

Just over one-third of the cases inspected contained assessments which did not identify or analyse who was at risk or the nature of that risk. For example, in one case, the inspector found that:

“The case was assessed as low risk of serious harm but the case manager had not considered the impact of emotional harm on the victim, or the information from the victim worker that the victim had subsequently had to reduce the hours he was working”.

2.2. Planning	
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.	Good

Our rating²⁰ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	80%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	81%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	65%

²⁰ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?

Planning for supporting the child's desistance was sufficient in most of the cases inspected. Plans were well structured, took account of individual needs, sought to build on strengths in the child's life, were sensitive to maturity and involved the individual or their parents/carers.

In one case, where the child had been sentenced to a long detention and training order, the inspector found that:

"The child's mother and father were included in sentence planning arrangements. In planning for release on temporary licence, the case manager included the victim's worker input. With sentence planning arrangements, the original case manager planned for the child to take part in offence-focused work, 'Life minus violence', sessions with [the] psychology team and education".

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In most cases, we found sufficient attention being paid to the safety and wellbeing of the child. We found good planning for the involvement of other agencies, and good alignment with other plans to protect or care for the child. This is illustrated by the inspector's finding in the following example:

"There was planning, mainly managed by social care, on how to keep the child safe. This included support for him at his father's home, where he was released to, and [had] regular contact with the social worker, when he had to collect his weekly allowance. Early Break, the substance misuse team, were also involved, with regular contact to discuss his substance misuse issues".

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

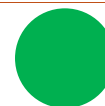
Planning had a sufficient focus on keeping other people safe in the majority of cases inspected (13 out of 20). We found examples of this work being done thoroughly and well; for example, in the case of a child with a prolific offending history, the inspector saw that:

"The case planning forums in case records show evidence [of] a multi-agency partnership with the youth justice service case manager, deputy youth justice service manager (Chair), the police, child social care workers, housing unit manager and victim worker, working to risk manage the child in custody and in the community in preparation for his release. There was also evidence of the seconded probation officer being involved in [a] prison meeting specifically for the transition process to adult probation services, six weeks after the child's 18th birthday. Licence conditions planned for child's release to include non-contact with co-defendants, an exclusion area, offending behaviour activity, along with other interventions to manage risk of harm to others through the integrated offender management scheme".

There were, however, cases in which plans did not demonstrate an adequate focus on issues concerning keeping other people safe. In one case, the inspector identified specific concerns about the lack of consideration of the victim of the offence:

"Anger management and emotional control were identified as areas for the child to address, and these were linked to the index offence. There are no contingency planning arrangements, however, linked to the victim of the index offence, who was the child's former partner. There is no mention in planning arrangements of police or multi-agency involvement linked to safety planning to keep other people safe".

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

Good

Our rating²¹ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	88%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	85%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	72%

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?

In our inspection, we found good levels of effective support for the child's desistance from further offending in almost all cases. The services provided were those most likely to bring about change, and were individualised and delivered in a way that encouraged compliance. This can be illustrated by the following observation by the inspector:

"The case manager built a very good relationship with the child and his family. Sessions were delivered on peer pressure, anger management and substance misuse but the main issue in this case was the safeguarding of this child. A transition meeting took place, where the child met his new probation officer and future targets were jointly set".

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?

In delivering the sentence, YJS staff demonstrated a clear capacity for sustaining a focus on the safety of the child. In the same case as above, the inspector found:

"Good partnership working occurred to keep him safe. A National Referral Mechanism referral was made and the child was accepted as being the victim of criminal exploitation. He was given additional support from the child criminal exploitation team. Once the child reached the age of 18, the case manager made a referral to adult social care, which was accepted".

There was strong collaboration between relevant agencies in the delivery of the sentence, and clear arrangements to support children who were sexually or criminally exploited.

²¹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annex 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?

We found effective arrangements to support the safety of other people in many of the cases inspected. There were good inter-agency arrangements and these were used well, including the use of sanctions such as recall to custody when the risk of harm to other people was seen to be increasing. In many cases, good risk of harm assessment and planning led to the delivery of work that went on to manage these issues effectively. The following is an example of what we found in several of the cases we inspected:

“Risk-focused interventions had been delivered, including a knife awareness session, as there was an allegation that a knife was used in the index offence, although this was never proven. There had also been a lot of victim awareness work, both in terms of the indirect victim – his mother, and the impact of the offence on her – and the direct victim, who was an older person who was assaulted. The child engaged in ‘shuttle mediation’, leading to a letter of explanation which was shared with the victim”.

In some cases, the effectiveness of supporting the safety of other people was limited because of a lack of focus on the potential to cause harm. In these cases, where risk of harm issues had been identified, there was insufficient attention to issues concerning the child’s attitude to their offending. There were missed opportunities to engage the child in reflection on past and present behaviour, and, in some instances, work to consider victims had not taken place.

2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.

Requires improvement

Our rating²² for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	68%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	75%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	50%

²² The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?

We expect that all cases will be frequently reviewed, particularly in the light of constant changes in a child's life. In most of the cases inspected, there was evidence that reviews were taking place and that key issues, such as the need to escalate concerns to line managers, occurred as a consequence – for example, in a case where an intervention had not been made available.

In the YJS, many reviews take place in formal panels, chaired by managers. Inspectors located good evidence of this having an impact on the delivery of work, as illustrated below:

“There is clear evidence of effective reviewing, from the more formal panels to the work completed in sessions. When a piece of work was required to be followed up, this was done and the child was involved in the process. The only talking point with the youth justice service worker was the need for an exit strategy and gradually removing the external controls on the child”.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

The focus on using reviews to keep the child safe was sufficient in three-quarters of the cases inspected. We found good examples of information sharing leading to appropriate and well-coordinated changes to the supervision of children. In one case, the inspector identified that:

“... there is evidence in the case record and the Asset Plus assessment of the child residing at home and not having any more reported missing from home episodes. Children's services reduced their involvement from child protection to child in need based on this improvement, and the case manager had not received any further intelligence from the police regarding the child's behaviour in the community”.

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

We are concerned that too few of the cases (50 per cent) retained a focus on keeping other people safe through the process of review. Where there is a combination of harmful offending behaviour and complex safety issues, the need to review the case carefully and regularly is of foremost importance. Equally, cases of this nature can be the most challenging to manage. In one such case, which had a combination of harmful offending (armed robbery and possession of a knife), Looked After Child arrangements leading to accommodation outside the home area, and vulnerability due to child criminal exploitation, the inspector found that:

“The child ended up in custody but there were significant indications that this would happen. The risk of harm was escalating and even the child admitted to this. It was never fully established what was going on, and the constant movement between areas and boundaries within a short distance meant that services became fragmented”.

3. Out of court disposals



We inspected 17 cases managed by the YOT that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of three youth conditional cautions, four youth cautions and nine community resolutions; one case had been worked with on a preventative basis. We interviewed the case managers in 17 cases.

We examined the quality of assessment; planning; and implementation and delivery of services. Each of these elements was inspected in respect of work done to address desistance. For the 10 cases where there were factors related to harm, we also inspected work done to keep other people safe. In the 13 cases where there were relevant factors, we looked at work done to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. We also looked at the quality of joint working with the local police. The quality of the work undertaken needs to be above a specified threshold for each aspect of supervision to be rated as satisfactory.

In the YJS, over 80 per cent of the cases met our requirements for the quality of assessment, leading to a rating of 'Outstanding' for this standard. As a result of the relatively small sample size, the ratings panel agreed to exercise professional discretion to establish a rating of 'Good' for the planning standard, given the generally strong scores in this section. Sixty-five per cent or more of the out-of-court disposals cases we inspected met our requirements for implementation and joint working, leading to a rating of 'Good' for each of these standards.

During the last quarter of 2019, the YJS revised the process for out-of-court disposal work. This involved the adoption of a comprehensive assessment tool, based on research into best practice. The tool requires the assessor to balance the issues of desistance, safety and wellbeing, and risk to others in formulating a plan of intervention. In almost all the cases inspected, the YJS worked to a 15-day deadline to produce a report to the decision-making panel. This provides advice to that panel about the most appropriate disposal.

Strengths:

- The tool used for assessment of cases prior to the decision-making panel is well deployed, and yielded a rating of 'Outstanding', as the inspectors were impressed by the standard of work being produced.
- All cases are dealt with in the timescales set by the new process.
- There is evidence of very strong partnership working in the delivery of out-of-court disposal interventions.
- Assessment and interventions are founded on good engagement with the child, and their parent/carer.

Areas for improvement:

- The focus on risk of harm is not always sustained throughout the period of work with the YJS.
- Contingency arrangements need to be properly documented, in order to respond to increased or decreased risk factors relating to the child's own safety or the risk of harm to others.

Work with children receiving out-of-court disposals will be more effective if it is well targeted, planned and implemented. In our inspections, we look at a sample of cases. In each of those cases, we inspect against four standards.

3.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.

Outstanding

Our rating²³ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	82%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	81%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	82%

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?

The adoption and appropriate use of a comprehensive assessment tool meant that almost all cases inspected provided sufficient analysis of how to support the child's desistance from offending. Although the mode of intervention was at the lowest possible level, proportionate to the offending behaviour, it was evident that the cases inspected were frequently of children with troubled lives. These required, and received, skilled interventions.

In one case, the inspector found that there was a:

"... clear and detailed assessment of all the desistance factors. This girl had been the victim of abuse, both physical and sexual, and was carrying a knife for what she said was her own protection. The most pressing concern was her mental health. Two weeks after the joint decision-making panel took place, she was sectioned for her own protection following suicide threats".

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?

The large majority of cases had an assessment which provided sufficient analysis of how to keep the child safe. The cases inspected were consistently good at identifying risk factors, and drew on appropriate sources of information.

There was a high rate of concordance between the case manager and inspector's view of the level of risk to the safety of the child (14 out of 17 cases). Again, the complexity of cases was worthy of note, but it was clear that these issues were appropriately managed within the relevant disposal. We found evidence of skilful and helpful assessment. In one case, the inspector observed:

"The case manager had worked with the child on a preventative strand prior to the out-of-court disposal, so, therefore, was aware of some of the issues and concerns of the case. The case manager identified the adverse childhood experiences of the child, which included him witnessing domestic abuse while growing up and the death of his father from a drug overdose".

²³ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?

Almost all the cases inspected contained sufficient analysis of how to keep other people safe. The level of risk of harm identified by the case manager was, in most cases, in accordance with the view of the inspector (13 out of 17).

Inspectors were impressed by the clarity of the assessments, as the following example demonstrates:

“Members of the public and pedestrians were identified as those being at risk of serious harm through the child’s illegal and erratic driving. Offending behaviour work to reduce the risk of serious harm level will include work being conducted that focuses on victims, driving offences and peer influences. Police have been identified as an agency by the case manager to further monitor and review the child’s behaviour”.

3.2. Planning



Planning is well informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers

Good

Our rating²⁴ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does planning focus on supporting the child or young person’s desistance?	71%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child or young person safe?	67%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	60%

Does planning focus on supporting the child’s desistance?

Planning supported the child’s desistance from offending in most of the cases inspected, with evidence that the case managers thought beyond the period of intervention towards mainstream services as part of full reintegration. For example, we found what was a:

“... very good plan for intervention, which the child and parent were actively involved in. The plan addressed all areas of desistance and further planned to access mainstream services, in terms of education, and positive activities, in terms of community integration”.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?

In most cases, there was sufficient planning to keep children safe. When this was done well, there was good multi-agency working, aligning the YJS plan with other plans. We found a case of exemplary practice, described by the inspector thus:

²⁴ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

“Planning is a really strong aspect of this case, given the number of professionals involved and the number of meetings there are. The youth justice service case manager is a constant thread through all of this and is at the centre of coordinating meetings. There is a team around the family, and upcoming meetings regarding child protection plans. The planning also includes the schools involved with the child’s younger brother, as there is a clear, holistic approach to the management of the case”.

Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?

Planning focused on keeping other people safe in 60 per cent of cases and was sufficient when it was necessary for other agencies to be involved with the child. In one case, we found a comprehensive approach, which included:

“... regular communication with police, home visits to [the] grandmother’s address and discussion with [the] grandmother about risk concerns to ensure [the] child’s safety. There were case planning forums to devise actions, including frequency of contact, aimed at managing the risk posed by the child. These forums involve the police, youth justice service staff, children’s social care staff, and health and education professionals”.

It was of concern, however, that contingency arrangements were insufficient in too many of the cases inspected (7 out of 10). These are important as there should be a clear plan of action in the event of risk of harm either increasing or decreasing.

3.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Good
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Our rating²⁵ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% yes
Does service delivery effectively support the child or young person’s desistance?	71%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child or young person?	77%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	67%

Does service delivery effectively support the child’s desistance?

Most cases we inspected sufficiently supported the child’s desistance. There were particular strengths in the development of an effective working relationship with the child and their parents/carers (15 out of 17 cases) and encouraging compliance with the work of the YJS (94 per cent). The following case is a good illustration of the work we inspected:

²⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

“The child was working with the YJS on a prevention basis, [and] there is evidence of a good working relationship with the case manager and child. In this case, the delivery of services was done by both the case manager, in terms of specific offending behaviour, and other services, in terms of Healthy Young Minds (wellbeing support), Rochdale Connections Trust (mentoring service) and Maverick Stars boxing sessions”.

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?

In the majority of cases (9 out of 13), we found that service delivery promoted the wellbeing of the child, and there was good working with other organisations, when this was necessary, in 80 per cent of inspected cases. In one case, we found a range of agencies working to support the child and their family:

“There are numerous professionals involved with the child, ranging from teachers, substance misuse staff and social workers. There is evidence that the contact within, and outside, of meetings is regular and detailed. There are really good processes in place regarding the team around the family and upcoming child protection processes, and the issues facing the child are clear”.

Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?

Work to support the safety of other people was sufficient in the majority of cases inspected, and the services delivered were almost always (86 per cent) sufficient to manage and minimise the risk of harm. In a small number of cases (3 out of 7), we found that issues of concern to victims had not been properly addressed.

3.4. Joint working 

Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	Good
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Our rating²⁶ for joint working is based on the following key questions, which are only asked in youth conditional caution cases:

	% yes
Are the YOT’s recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child or young person, supporting joint decision making?	82%
Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out of court disposal?	66%

²⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. See Annexe 2 for a more detailed explanation.

Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision-making?

We found that, owing to the successful adoption of a new assessment tool, the recommendations made to the out-of-court disposal panel were appropriate, proportionate and showed consideration of the child's acceptance of responsibility in all cases. Where joint decision-making took place, this was clearly recorded in all cases. The new system, adopted in the last quarter of 2019, is clearly working well and as intended.

Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?

This finding is based on a very small sub-sample of cases where youth conditional cautioning was used. One of the cases was insufficient; it had been allowed to drift and police were not kept up to date concerning the progress of the work being undertaken.

Annexe 1: Methodology

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation standards

The standards against which we inspect youth offending services are based on established models and frameworks, which are grounded in evidence, learning and experience. These standards are designed to drive improvements in the quality of work with children who have offended.²⁷

The inspection methodology is summarised below, linked to the three domains in our standards framework. We focused on obtaining evidence against the standards, key questions and prompts in our inspection framework.

Domain one: organisational delivery

The youth justice service submitted evidence in advance and the Chair of the Partnership Board delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- How do organisational delivery arrangements in this area make sure that the work of your YOS is as effective as it can be, and that the life chances of children who have offended are improved?
- What are your priorities for further improving these arrangements?

During the main fieldwork phase, we conducted one interview with case managers, asking them about their experiences of training, development, management supervision and leadership. We held various meetings, which allowed us to triangulate evidence and information. In total, we conducted 11 meetings, which included meetings with managers, partner organisations and staff. The evidence collected under this domain was judged against our published ratings characteristics.²⁸

Domain two: court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Sixty per cent of the cases selected were those of children who had received court disposals six to nine months earlier, enabling us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing. Where necessary, interviews with other people closely involved in the case also took place.

We examined 25 court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

Domain three: Out-of-court disposals

We completed case assessments over a one-week period, examining case files and interviewing case managers. Forty per cent of cases selected were those of children who had received out-of-court disposals three to five months earlier. This enabled us to examine work in relation to assessing, planning, implementing and joint working.

²⁷ HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards are available here:
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/our-standards-and-ratings/>

Where necessary, interviews with other people closely involved in the case also took place.

We examined 17 out-of-court disposals. The sample size was set to achieve a confidence level of 80 per cent (with a margin of error of 5), and we ensured that the ratios in relation to gender, sentence or disposal type, risk of serious harm, and risk to safety and wellbeing classifications matched those in the eligible population.

In some areas of this report, data may have been split into smaller sub-samples – for example, male/female cases. Where this is the case, the margin of error for the sub-sample findings may be higher than 5.

Annexe 2: Inspection results

In this inspection, we conducted a detailed examination of a sample of 25 court disposals and 17 out-of-court disposals. In each of those cases, we inspect against four standards: assessment, planning, and implementation/delivery. For court disposals, we look at reviewing; and in out-of-court disposals, we look at joint working with the police. For each standard, inspectors answer a number of key questions about different aspects of quality, including whether there was sufficient analysis of the factors related to offending; the extent to which young offenders were involved in assessment and planning; and whether enough was done to assess the level of risk of harm posed, and to manage that risk.

To score an 'Outstanding' rating for the sections on court disposals or out-of-court disposals, 80 per cent or more of the cases we analyse have to be assessed as sufficient. If between 65 per cent and 79 per cent are judged to be sufficient, then the rating is 'Good' and if between 50 per cent and 64 per cent are judged to be sufficient, then a rating of 'Requires improvement' is applied. Finally, if less than 50 per cent are sufficient, then we rate this as 'Inadequate'.

The rating at the standard level is aligned to the lowest banding at the key question level, recognising that each key question is an integral part of the standard. Therefore, if we rate three key questions as 'Good' and one as 'Inadequate', the overall rating for that standard is 'Inadequate'.

Lowest banding (key question level)	Rating (standard)
Minority: <50%	Inadequate
Too few: 50–64%	Requires improvement
Reasonable majority: 65–79%	Good
Large majority: 80%+	Outstanding

Additional scoring rules are used to generate the overall YOT rating. Each of the 12 standards are scored on a 0–3 scale in which 'Inadequate' = 0; 'Requires improvement' = 1; 'Good' = 2; and 'Outstanding' = 3. Adding these scores produces a total score ranging from 0 to 36, which is banded to produce the overall rating, as follows:

- 0–6 = Inadequate
- 7–18 = Requires improvement
- 19–30 = Good
- 31–36 = Outstanding.

1. Organisational delivery

Standards and key questions	Rating
<p>1.1. Governance and leadership</p> <p>The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.</p> <p>1.1.1. Is there a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?</p> <p>1.1.2. Do the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery?</p> <p>1.1.3. Does the leadership of the YOT support effective service delivery?</p>	Good
<p>1.2. Staff</p> <p>Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.</p> <p>1.2.1. Do staffing and workload levels support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?</p> <p>1.2.2. Do the skills of YOT staff support the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children?</p> <p>1.2.3. Does the oversight of work support high-quality delivery and professional development?</p> <p>1.2.4. Are arrangements for learning and development comprehensive and responsive?</p>	Good
<p>1.3. Partnerships and services</p> <p>A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.</p> <p>1.3.1. Is there a sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the profile of children, to ensure that the YOT can deliver well-targeted services?</p> <p>1.3.2. Does the YOT partnership have access to the volume, range and quality of services and interventions to meet the needs of all children?</p> <p>1.3.3. Are arrangements with statutory partners, providers and other agencies established, maintained and used effectively to deliver high-quality services?</p>	Good

1.4. Information and facilities	Good
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Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children.

- 1.4.1. Are the necessary policies and guidance in place to enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children?
- 1.4.2. Does the YOT's delivery environment(s) meet the needs of all children and enable staff to deliver a quality service?
- 1.4.3. Do the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems enable staff to deliver a quality service, meeting the needs of all children?
- 1.4.4. Is analysis, evidence and learning used effectively to drive improvement?

2. Court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
2.1. Assessment	Requires improvement
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.	
2.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	88%
2.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	88%
2.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	60%
2.2. Planning	Good
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.	
2.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	80%
2.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	81%
2.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	65%

2.3. Implementation and delivery	Good
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	
2.3.1. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child's desistance?	88%
2.3.2. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	85%
2.3.3. Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	72%
2.4. Reviewing	Requires improvement
Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.	
2.4.1. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	68%
2.4.2. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	75%
2.4.3. Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	50%

3. Out-of-court disposals

Standards and key questions	Rating and % yes
3.1. Assessment	Outstanding
Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.	
3.1.1. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	82%
3.1.2. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	81%
3.1.3. Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	82%

3.2. Planning	Good
Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents/carers.	
3.2.1. Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	71%
3.2.2. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	67%
3.2.3. Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	60%*
3.3. Implementation and delivery	Good
High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	
3.3.1. Does service delivery support the child's desistance?	71%
3.3.2. Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	77%
3.3.3. Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	67%
3.4. Joint working	Good
Joint working with the police supports the delivery of high-quality, personalised and coordinated services.	
3.4.1. Are the YOT's recommendations sufficiently well-informed, analytical and personalised to the child, supporting joint decision-making?	82%
3.4.2. Does the YOT work effectively with the police in implementing the out-of-court disposal?	66%

*Professional judgement exercised by the ratings panel, as the score was within 5 percentage points of the next grade boundary and the panel considered that a 'Good' rating was a more accurate fit to the work of the YJS.

Annexe 3: Glossary

AssetPlus (Asset+)	Assessment and planning framework tool developed by the Youth Justice Board for work with children who have offended, or are at risk of offending, that reflects current research and understanding of what works with children
Community resolution	Used in low-level, often first-time, offences where there is informal agreement, often also involving the victim, about how the offence should be resolved. Community resolution is a generic term; in practice, many different local terms are used to mean the same thing
Court disposals	The sentence imposed by the court. Examples of youth court disposals are referral orders, youth rehabilitation orders and detention and training orders.
Child protection	Work to make sure that all reasonable action has been taken to keep to a minimum the risk of a child experiencing significant harm.
First-time entrant	A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome (youth caution, youth conditional caution or conviction) for the first time
HMI Probation	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
ICT	Information and communications technology
IYSS	Integrated Youth Support Services
Local authority	YOTs are often a team within a specific local authority.
National Referral Mechanism	National Referral Mechanism – the national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support them.
Out-of-court disposal	The resolution of a normally low-level offence, where it is not in the public interest to prosecute, through a community resolution, youth caution or youth conditional caution
Personalised	A personalised approach is one in which services are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, giving people as much choice and control as possible over the support they receive. We use this term to include diversity factors
Referral order	A restorative court order which can be imposed when the child appearing before the court pleads guilty, and whereby the threshold does not meet a youth rehabilitation order
Risk of serious harm	A term used in AssetPlus. All cases are classified as presenting a low/medium/high/very high risk of serious harm to others. HM Inspectorate of Probation uses this term when referring to the classification system, but uses the broader term, 'risk of harm' when referring to the analysis which should take place in order to determine the classification level. This helps to clarify the distinction between the probability of an event occurring and the impact/severity of the event. The term, 'risk of serious harm', only incorporates 'serious' impact, whereas using 'risk of harm' enables the necessary attention to be given to those young offenders for whom lower impact/severity harmful behaviour is probable

Safeguarding	A wider term than 'child protection', it involves promoting a child's health and development, and ensuring that their overall welfare needs are met
Safety and wellbeing	AssetPlus replaced the assessment of vulnerability with a holistic outlook of a child's safety and wellbeing concerns. It is defined as "...those outcomes where the young person's safety and wellbeing may be compromised through their own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts/omissions of others" (AssetPlus Guidance, 2016)
YJB	Youth Justice Board – a government body responsible for monitoring and advising ministers on the effectiveness of the youth justice system. The YJB provides grants and guidance to the youth offending teams
Youth caution	A caution accepted by a child following admission to an offence where it is not considered to be in the public interest to prosecute the offender
Youth conditional caution	As for a youth caution, but with conditions attached that the child is required to comply with for up to the next three months. Non-compliance may result in the child being prosecuted for the original offence
YOT/YOS/YJS	'Youth offending team' (YOT) is the term used in the <i>Crime and Disorder Act 1998</i> to describe a multi-agency team that aims to reduce youth offending. YOTs are known locally by many titles, such as youth justice service (YJS), youth offending service (YOS), and other generic titles that may illustrate their wider role in the local area in delivering services for children
YOT management board	The YOT management board holds the YOT to account to ensure it achieves the primary aim of preventing offending by children.
Youth rehabilitation order	Overarching community sentence to which the court applies requirements (e.g. supervision requirement or unpaid work).



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